New Zealand's fastest-growing gang has spread to the North Shore, and is linked to this week's hyper-violent attacks.

The *Weekend Herald* has learned that one of those charged with the attacks, an 18-year-old from Glenfield, has a close family connection to the North Shore "recruiter" for the street gang, known as the Killer Beez, that started in the South Auckland suburb of Otara and now has followers throughout the city.

North Shore Mayor Andrew Williams last night described the gang's presence as "disturbing".

He said he would meet police next week to make sure street gangs did not get a foothold on the North Shore, and wanted to tell the Killer Beez or any of their counterparts considering crossing the bridge it was no "soft touch".

Police investigating Wednesday's attacks have raised the possibility that they were done as a "prospecting" exercise for the Killer Beez.

One of the accused has told family it was not.

The four attacks included two on couples in which a metal bat or bar was used to deliver blows to their heads.

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Both couples were hospitalised and one of the women had brain surgery.

One attack began after the offenders asked: "Have you ever met a real gangster?"

The Killer Beez have an adult leadership, and have attracted hundreds of followers in Auckland and Northland since beginning five years ago.

Known by their yellow colours, they have a spin-off hip hop music label and clothing range.

They are known for street crime, drugs and burglaries but have not been linked to any headline-grabbing violent crime.

Police became aware the Killer Beez were trying to establish themselves on the North Shore last year.

The man identified by police as the Killer Beez recruiter is in a relationship with the 18-year-old's aunt.

The 18-year-old lived with them late last year, and the recruiter was in court supporting him on Thursday.

Street gang and youth violence has led to 11 killings in Auckland since October 2005, but this week's attacks are the first major incident on the North Shore.

North Shore police commander Inspector Les Paterson yesterday refused to comment on any link between the attacks and the Killer Beez.

The four accused - two aged 18 from Glenfield, a 19-year-old formerly of Gisborne and a 16-year-old - have name suppression.

The 16-year-old appeared in the Youth Court and was granted bail. The others were remanded in custody.

A family member of the 18-year-old confirmed the tie to the Killer Beez recruiter, but said the group was acting alone.

The accused were into "American gangster stuff", and were "drunk and just plain stupid".

The mother of the other 18-year-old accused said he had been a "try-hard" gangster since dropping out of Glenfield College three years ago, but she knew him to wear the blue colour of the Crips rather than Killer Beez yellow "although he goes with whatever he thinks is cool at the time".

The 19-year-old former Gisborne man has Mongrel Mob ties.

- Beck Vass